

# Liberty Wing merges planning units

By Capt. Patrick Ryder  
Public affairs

A new wing staff agency was formed here when the 48th Fighter Wing recently restructured the way it creates and reviews plans base-wide.

Both planning flights from the 48th Operations Group and the 48th Logistics Group merged Jan. 15 and are now the 48th Fighter Wing Plans Office.

"It's been done at a couple of other bases and at Air Combat Command, so a bit of precedence has been set," said Maj. Bob Lemmon, 48th plans chief.

The move was the result of a study conducted last summer by wing officials to determine what the effect would be for planning across the wing, according to the major.

The unit's mission is ensuring all 48th FW

plans are properly composed and coordinated before they're approved by the wing commander and tested in the field.

"In the past, what we've had was the LG or support group that had a plan that they've owned," said Lemmon. "They've been able to write that plan in a vacuum, based on what goes on in the LG or the OG or the support areas."

Because the plans belonged to different groups around base, a unit didn't have to ask permission or coordinate their plans through other units that may be affected, he said.

The new plans office changes all that by becoming the focal point and clearinghouse for wing plans.

"It really is a nice setup," said 1st Lt. Shannon Rogers, 48th deputy installation deployment officer. "Everybody knows when there's a problem dealing with mobility, plans, war readiness materiel or support agreements, they go straight to the XP. It cuts out the middlemen."

From this point forward, all plans in the wing must go through the XP office before being approved by the wing commander, said Lemmon.

"It should standardize the format plans are in," he said. That's important because of the number of wing plans.

"(The wing) has a huge amount of plans," said Lemmon. "We're in the neighborhood of more than 300 plans that we touch — probably 40 or 50 — that we deal with all the time."

Although Lemmon officially began work as the plans chief in November, the final touches are still being made to bring the staff agency online. Ten people from the 48th Operations Support Squadron plans flight and nine from the

48th Logistics Support Squadron plans flight recently transferred to the unit, but now they must wait for office space, computers and equipment. All 20 XP members are scheduled to move in mid-February to Bldg. 1159, near the 48th Security Police Squadron.

The biggest challenge, however, won't be setting up shop. It'll be trying to take two units that ran smoothly on their own and make them better, according to Lemmon.

"My biggest challenge is to take (the LSS plans flight and OSS plans flight) and put them together ... to make that a better office than it was as two singles," said the major. The challenge is to put them together and have synergy take hold

and affect the wing in a positive manner.

Although it appears the consolidation of wing plans means the 48th OG and 48th LG lose staff members, it shouldn't be seen that way, said Capt. Jerry Weihe, 48th Plans installation deployment chief.

"The groups aren't losing a staff," said the captain. "The wing is gaining a consolidated and efficient function."

Two other plans office functions will be to provide the wing's battle staff mission director and serve as a central storehouse for exercise and deployment continuity.

Traditionally, the 48th OSS commander served as the command post's battle staff

mission director during contingencies, deployments or exercises. But, the duty took away precious time the commander and his operations officer needed to fulfill squadron duties, said Lemmon. Now, the plans chief and his deputy will assume this role, allowing the 48th OSS commander to focus on his primary command responsibilities.

The plans office will also store wing continuity information developed from various exercises and deployments, something not always done.

"We'd get back (from a deployment), somebody would write a trip report and it would get stuck in somebody's drawer," explained Lemmon. That often meant valuable information wasn't shared with other wing members.

"So we're going to become the repository for all those kinds of documentation," he said. "The next time somebody's going to someplace, whether it be Zaragoza, Red Flag, or Maple Flag ... we're going to be able to have some kind of smarts set up so that (we can say), 'yeah, here it is, here's what happened (on that deployment).'"

Despite the tough obstacles of consolidation, procuring equipment and standardizing hundreds of dynamic wing plans, Lemmon emphasized that the mission of the new wing agency is clear.

"We're here to serve the 48th FW and make a positive contribution," he said. "And thanks to the outstanding people in our unit and the support we've received from across the wing, we'll do just that."

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***1st Lt. Shannon Rogers  
Deputy installation deployment officer***



***Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.***

Photo by A1C Robert H. Gerlach

***(From left) Capt. Sharon Solomon and her husband SSgt. Ralph Solomon talk with Col. Mary Saunders, Air Force director of transportation, following her presentation at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration Banquet Sunday at the officers' club. More than 180 people attended the event.***